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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - POSITIVE COVERAGE OF SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

¶1. SUMMARY: Chilean dailies gave front-page coverage to the interaction between Presidents Obama and Bachelet at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad. Commentary about U.S. policy toward Cuba and Venezuela also figured prominently, including the photograph of President Obama extending his hand to Hugo Chavez. End Summary.

Bachelet and Obama at the SOA

¶2. As Presidents Obama and Bachelet waited to enter the official reception, the U.S. President approached Bachelet. He told her that Vice President Joe Biden was "'very impressed' with his visit to Chile and recognized Foreign Affairs Minister Mariano Fernandez. Reportedly Obama said to Fernandez, "I truly admire your President" (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 4/18).

¶3. Photograph of President Obama greeting Bachelet at the Summit: the bilateral meeting between Presidents Obama and Bachelet was set for June, said a Chilean delegate to the summit, who added that the U.S. President and Bachelet have encountered each other four times at the Summit (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 4/20).

¶4. Photograph of Presidents Bachelet and Obama sitting next to each other at the UNASUR meeting: Several gestures marked the first encounter between the two presidents at the Summit. On Friday, the U.S. President approached Bachelet and spoke to her briefly about Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Chile. Yesterday, at the UNASUR, both spoke briefly again (La Tercera, 4/19).

¶5. The one element that has made this a historical Summit was the many gestures of rapprochement: greetings, presents, and remarks on almost every topic that is of interest to the region relegated the written declaration to second place. Obama made a last gesture right before going back to Washington. He admitted that the half-century U.S. policy on Cuba had simply "not worked." He also demanded "deeds and not words," from the region, especially from Cuba and Venezuela. Obama also said it was 'interesting' to learn about the thousands of Cuban physicians working in other countries in the region, stating that this could be more effective than military might to gain influence in the region (La Nacion, government-owned, editorially independent, circ. 4,200, 4/20).

¶6. Captioned photograph of the Chilean President and Obama: "Bachelet's Charisma Touches Obama." Subheadline: "I truly admire your President," Obama told Foreign Minister Mariano Fernandez (Las Ultimas Noticias, leading-circulation, popular, circ. 140,000,

4/19).

¶17. Quotes: "We had not attended a Summit that had this level of candidness or cordiality" (Mexican President Felipe Calderon); "There is a totally different attitude on the part of Obama, of more openness, more dialogue, and more respect. The prospects are good" (Manuel Zelaya, President of Honduras (La Nacion, 4/20).

¶18. The leaders at the Summit were "'enchanted" with the new White House occupant. Even the controversy over the final declaration -- highly criticized by Hugo Chavez and his allies -- practically disappeared. Manuel Zelaya, President of Honduras and an ally of Venezuela, said, "Obama won Latin America's interest." Chavez said that the Summit had been a victory for his government's ideals, adding that Obama is making a "turn" in its bilateral relation (La Tercera, 4/20).

¶19. Captioned photograph of Obama and Bachelet: "President Obama polite and close to the (Chilean) President at the gala dinner, where both sat next to each other (El Mercurio, 4/19).

¶10. The Chilean President and Obama concurred at the Summit on promoting energy. Photograph of the two sitting next to each at the UNASUR meeting. The two had already spoken on Friday, when the U.S. President approached Bachelet and briefly spoke to her about Joe Biden's visit to Chile in late march. At UNASUR, both had more official dialogue, whereby Bachelet thanked Obama for validating the new continental organization as a regional interlocutor (La Tercera, 4/19).

¶11. In their first meeting, UNASUR and the U.S. President discussed an agenda that did not exclude any topic. Obama urged nations to look to the future. Bachelet said that at the meeting there was a "reiteration of the commitment to set a new relationship between the United States and America, especially with South America, as partners, and with mutual respect" (El Mercurio, 4/19).

¶12. At the Summit, Chilean Minister of Energy Marcelo Tokman and his U.S. counterpart, Secretary Stephen Chu, sealed an agreement for the creation of a center to develop renewable energy, solar energy, and biofuels (La Tercera, 4/19 and 4/20, La Nacions, 4/20).

#### Commentaries and Editorials

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¶13. Column by journalist Raul Sohr: "There is today a new generation of Cubans in the United States; Fidel Castro no longer rules; the embargo does not have a useful purpose in changing Havana's behavior; the Cold War has been over for a long time. There are no true realistic political reasons to keep Cuba outside the brotherhood of nations to which it belongs" (La Nacion, 4/19).

¶14. Column by Alvaro Vargas Llosa: "With Sophisticated Diplomacy, Obama Dodges Danger"  
"Obama did well by announcing a change of policy toward Cuba before the Summit, cutting the wings of the sail heading strongly his way. He was also right in placing the ball in Castro's court, asking for reciprocity and reminding those at the Summit that unlike Castro, 'we were democratically elected.' This smart move undermined the effort of Daniel Ortega -- the strongest Cuban supporter -- because no one could contradict the fact that Obama had taken the lead with a concrete fact and with a serious offer to dialogue.... Obama balanced U.S. responsibility in past events with the request for his opponents to shed their ideological anti-Americanism.... His decision to embrace the leaders of different groups rather than hold bilateral meetings, dissolved the strength of the Chavista bloc by weakening the perception that Obama meets only with Washington's friends and excludes the 'carnivorous' left. This was, in sum, highly sophisticated diplomacy" (La Tercera, 4/19).

¶15. Column by Andres Oppenheimer: "I am skeptic about the sincerity of Cuba's claim that it hopes to improve its relations with United States. The dictatorship needs a confrontation with the United States to justify its absolute power and suppression of political, labor and civil rights.... I am not sure that the Obama administration has a clear strategy with regard to Cuba. White House officials say that 'the ball is now in Cuba's court' and that 'the United States formulates its policies on the basis of U.S.

interests, and not Cuba's. I'm confused and can bet that I am not the only one" (El Mercurio, 4/20).

¶16. Column by Juan Francisco Coloane: "The new U.S. policy is at a crossroad. It either maintains the doctrine of bringing about change in Cuba through the traditional interventionist pressure or contributes to rebuilding a nation on the basis of local elements (El Mostrador, on-line news agency, 4/20).

#### Cuba and Venezuela

¶17. In spite of the expectations, the Summit of the American concluded with a conventional declaration about the fight against crime and respect for immigrants. However, there was unprecedented diplomatic progress at the Summit, especially between the United States, Cuba, and Venezuela. After the Summit, Obama said that he had seen "potentially positive" signs at the Summit for relations with Cuba and Venezuela, but reiterated that "words must be followed by deeds," on the part of Havana and Caracas (El Mercurio, 4/20).

¶18. Headline: "United States says the embargo on Cuba has failed and announced a 'new beginning' with the island at the Summit of the Americas." Captioned Photo of Obama and Chavez shaking hands: "I want to be your friend."

The United States wants a new beginning with Cuba and made the most significant offer for dialogue since the 1962 break-up, with proposals that range from democratic reforms to human rights. With this, Obama recognized that the embargo has not worked and that it is necessary to change that policy, urging other countries to change too and look to the future (El Mercurio, 4/18).

¶19. Unexpected announcement, Hugo Chavez unexpectedly announced he had appointed Venezuela's representative to the OAS, Roy Chaderton as the new Ambassador to Washington. This could be a step to repair the damaged ties with the United States (El Mercurio, 4/19)

¶20. It was one of the most anticipated moments of the Summit: The greeting between Presidents Obama and Hugo Chavez, after seven years during which the Venezuelan has confronted Washington. And it happened after Obama crossed the room to shake hands with Chavez. Obama did the same with the leaders of the two other countries that have tens ties with United States: Bolivian Evo Morales and Nicaraguan Daniel Ortega (La Tercera, 4/18).

¶21. Chavez takes a step forward to repair relations with the United States and appoints Ambassador to Washington. "I brought you a present," said Hugo Chavez to Obama before the UNASUR meeting, handing him the book, "Open Veins to Latin America," by Eduardo Galeano. The U.S. President received it with a smile. Both Chavez and Obama have taken steps to repair the damaged relation between both countries. Chavez went even further and informed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton the appointment of an Ambassador to Washington (La Tercera, 4/19).

¶22. President Hugo Chavez appointed his representative to the OAS, Rody Chaderton as the next Ambassador to Washington, in what could be a step to normalize relations between the two countries (El Mercurio, 4/19).

¶23. "Chavez to the U.S. President: "I want to be your friend," Chavez said to Obama, after the latter crossed the room to introduce himself and shake his hand. "I could not refuse such a refined gesture," said Chavez (El Mercurio, 4/18).

SIMONS